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Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

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Mr. Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Bud:

Thank you for the note on our recent paper entitled Soviet Thinking on the Possibility of Armed Confrontation with the United States. I also appreciated Jack Matlock's commentary that you forwarded and agree with him that an elaboration of Andropov's style and strategy would have helped. I have attached some additional comments on Jack's remarks from one of my senior Soviet analysts.

Yours,

John N. McMahon
Acting Director of Central Intelligence

Attachments:
Tab A - Comments
Tab B - Intelligence Memorandum

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3 February 1984

Andropov's Leadership Style and Strategy

1. We would agree that the coercive measures employed by Stalin to improve the economy probably have some appeal to Andropov. Undoubtedly aware of the tensions that declining economic growth and inefficiency are generating in Soviet society, he seems to have set a course that combines regime firmness toward the population with greater rewards for hard work. It is an overall carrot and stick approach, albeit with the emphasis on the stick during Andropov's first year in office because of Brezhnev's inability to wrench productivity from the workplace. There is no doubt, moreover, that "conservative" elements in the party approve of Andropov's administrative measures (the discipline and anticorruption campaigns), but many Soviets would argue that these are needed prescriptions. That approval is likely to become more widespread since the measures appear to have contributed to an upturn in industrial productivity in 1983.

2. The stereotypical Russian image of Jews as profiteers may, in the present circumstances, cause anti-semitism to rise as part of the campaign for discipline in the economy. A similar campaign was conducted in the 1950s. There is, in fact, a notable increase in government-approved anti-semitic propaganda, which has taken the form of newspaper articles, broadcasts, and the widely-publicized (by Soviet standards) activities of the "Anti-Zionist Committee of Soviet

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Citizens." Although the Anti-Zionist Committee has not figured prominently in the Soviet media over the past several months, the Committee, staffed by people of Jewish ancestry, will probably serve as a mouthpiece for regime policy toward Soviet Jews in the future. We are also struck by the harshly anti-semitic article in Pravda on 17 January. This is the first time in recent memory that an article like this has appeared in such an authoritative forum. (See Tab B, our publication on the subject written some years ago, for more background.)

3. We agree that Russian nationalism is more pronounced, but this is not new with Andropov. Emerging demographic trends, which threaten to alter the ethnic balance of the population, the party and the military in favor of non-Russians, have engendered the growth of Russian nationalism since the late 1970s. In the face of foreign and domestic problems, Russian nationalism is also likely to increase. It is the traditional refuge of Soviet leaders in difficult circumstances. So far, however, recent Soviet leaders, including Andropov, have not moved away from the calculated blurring of Russian chauvinism and Soviet patriotism, stressing, as Stalin did, the former at the expense of the latter.

4. Clearly Andropov has a stake in the "appearance" of bilateral tension as long as it appears that the United States is the offending party. This would not be the first time that Soviet leaders have used international tensions to mobilize their population. Nevertheless, there is no necessary connection between what is essentially a propaganda strategy (e.g. US military threat, danger of war) and actual Soviet foreign policy behavior. There is no indication, for example, that the propaganda strategy is having an impact on operational foreign policy and, in fact, there are indications that the Soviets want to curb any further escalation in the spiral of tension. Moreover, we have seen other signs that the Soviets are telling their own people that the international environment is not that sour.

SUBJECT: Andropov's Leadership Style and Strategy

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